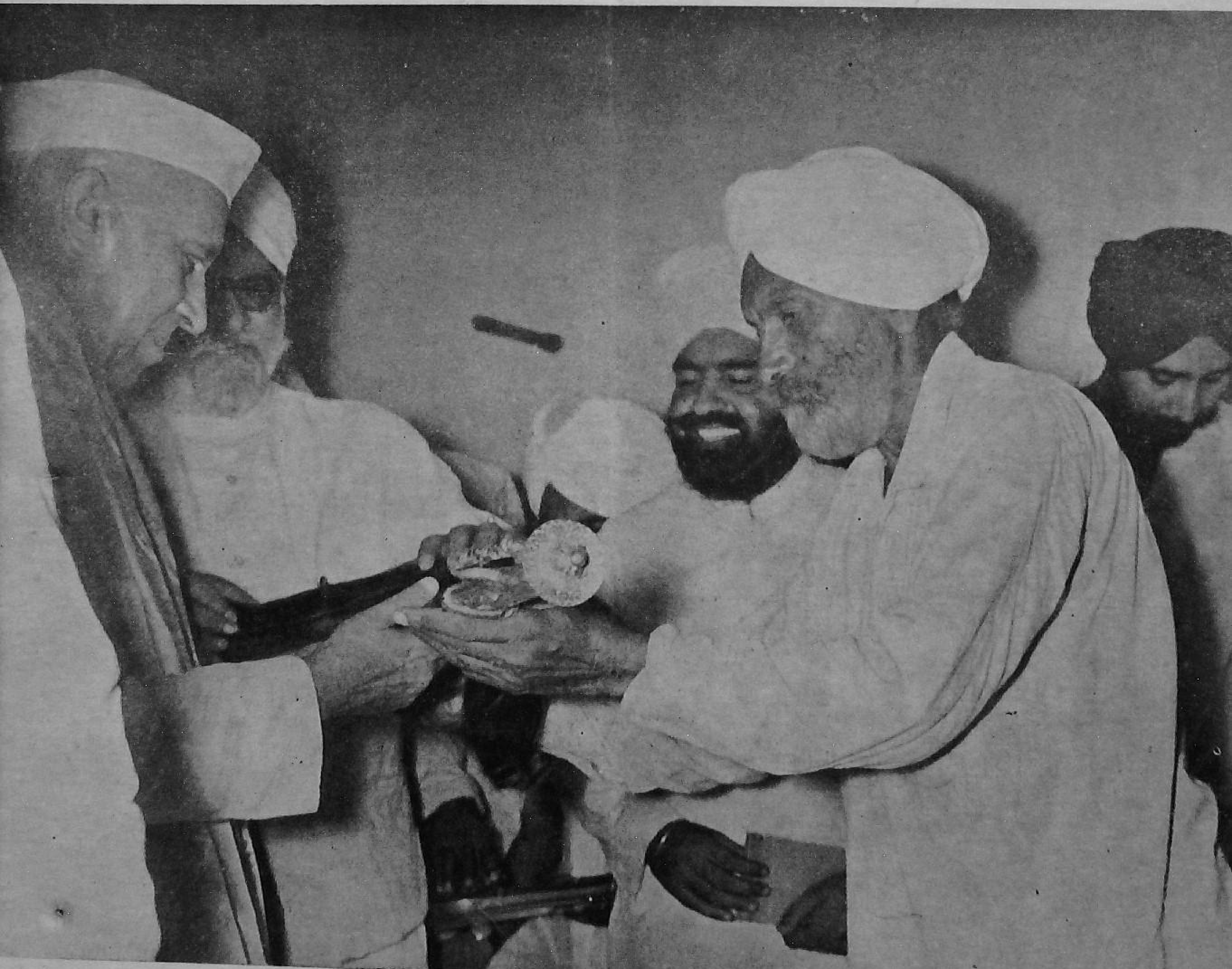
Panchayati Raj

30 SEP 1963

SEPTEMBER 1963



Sardar Naginder Singh of village Majri in the Punjab. A Hercules in the field of development, he has completed various projects costing about 1·5 lakhs of rupees. The Prime Minister visited the shrines of self-help. In the picture, Naginder Singh is seen offering 'Saropa' to the Prime Minister in honour of his visit.

A Dispensary for the sick and ailing.

A Veterinary Hospital to look after the diseased cattle.

NANAKSAR COLONY

A SHRINE OF SELF-HELP

A Middle School for the education of the girls.

A Service Co-operative for meeting the requirements of the cultivators.

Vol. IV SEPTEMBER 1963 No. 6

BHADRA-1885

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LETTERS

SOME PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES

Sir,

As a Sarpanch of a big village, I have experienced some difficulties in the working of the Panchayati Raj Act. I enumerate them as also suggest their solutions for the benefit of the readers of your journal.

Since the people who have to work out the Panchayat Act are not well-educated and have little legal bent of mind, the Act should be simple, and legally foolproof and comprehensive.

There should be separate Adalti Panchayats to deal with criminal and civil cases for experience has shown that the development work suffers when the same Panchayat deals with legal cases also. The people against whom the Panchayat decides the cases turn against the Panchayat and begin to interfere with the village development work. They in collusion with the Authorities often try to involve the Panches in criminal cases beyond the jurisdiction of their Panchayats. This is done in order to harass them. To defend themselves, the Panches should be provided free legal advice. There may be a Panchayat pleader at the Samiti level. He will also be available for defending Panchayat cases against which appeals are accepted in courts.

It is very dangerous to give legal powers to illiterate Sarpanches. They must be educated up to Middle Standard at least.

15-7-63 Yours etc.
Gharuan. *Sant Singh*
PUNJAB. *Sarpanch.*

NYAYA PANCHAYATS

Sir,

The report of the committee appointed by the Government of Mysore to go into the Panchayati Raj set-up in Mysore State, is just out. The committee has recommended the setting up of Nyaya Panchayats to try Civil and Criminal cases. I doubt very much if such Nyaya Panchayats would prove a success under the present circumstances. Since the members of the court belong to the same village they do not want to incur the displeasure of their friends, relatives and neighbours. In fact, they cannot afford to do so since they constantly have their eyes on the next elections due in 4 years. They have neither a legal bent of mind nor are they well-versed with legal procedures. Above all, many panchayats are afflicted with group politics and favourtism. Justice and fair play cannot be expected from them. The recommendations of the committee would be feasible if the panchayats felt a sense of responsibility, broad outlook and high moral integrity. It would take about a decade before the Panchayats could come up to the required standard. The recommendations may be put off till then.

17-8-1963. Yours etc.
Indi. *C. M. Motturswamy*
Distt. Bijapur, *Social Education Organiser.*

Prime Minister Visits Shrines of Self-help

Date : *8th July*, 1963. Place : Raipur Majri, a small village about 34 miles from Ludhiana in the Punjab. There was great excitement in the village. Streets were swept clean, houses white-washed and welcome arches and gateways went up along the newly-built 5 mile road connecting the village to the Grand Trunk Road. The whole village wore a festive appearance.

From early morning that day, children attired in their best, with colourful turbans on and the bright girls in their shilwar-kamiz had been moving about smartly in their school. Thousands of people from the surrounding villages had been streaming into the village to join a public meeting. High officials and the police in their hundreds had been busy making all necessary arrangements to control the surging crowds. The reason : the Prime Minister of India was to pay a visit to the village.

THE OPPORTUNITY

The happiest and the proudest man on the scene was, of course, Subedar Naginder Singh. For, it was he who had invited the Prime Minister to visit his village and the latter was doing so in fulfilment of an earlier promise. It all began with a news-story that had appeared in the press more than a year ago. This had caught the eye of the Prime Minister who was much impressed by the untiring efforts of the Subedar to help build up a number of institutions of community benefit such as a Girls' School, a Veterinary Hospital, a Co-operative Society, etc. He invited Naginder Singh to see him in New Delhi. The latter was taken by surprise. He could never imagine that he would be so lucky as to meet the Prime Minister one day. But here it was! His joy knew no bounds. He came to Delhi and met the Prime Minister. During the talks, Naginder Singh invited him to his village to see the things for himself. The request was made in such earnestness that the Prime Minister

Prime Minister inaugurating the Nanaksar Colony at Majri.

found it hard to refuse that. The question of the timing of his visit was left open subject to the Prime Minister's preoccupations of the State business. The opportunity came when the Prime Minister was invited to inaugurate the Panchayat Bhavan at Chandigarh. From there, he motored to the tiny village of Raipur Majri where an extremely warm and enthusiastic reception awaited him. The simple villagers wearing coloured turbans, the bright young ladies and mothers with babies in their arms turned up in their thousands from far and near to have his "darshan". He too was happy to be amidst them. He went round and saw the fine monuments of self-help, raised by Naginder Singh and his fellow villagers. There was a cluster of them : a Gurdwara, School, Hospital, Library and Rest House, Veterinary Hospital, Panchayat Ghar and Service Co-operative Store. These seven stars shone forth together in a place now known as "Guru Nanaksar Colony". All these institutions played a useful and vital role in the community life of the villagers. Shri Nehru cut a tape to formally inaugurate the colony and dedicated the useful shrines to the service of the community. He was full of admiration for the selfless efforts of Naginder Singh and the villagers. Later on, addressing a huge meeting of the villagers, he gave vent to his feelings by saying, "I am very happy to have visited these shrines of self-help which are not only good in themselves but are also a symbol of self-reliance which will also inspire others."

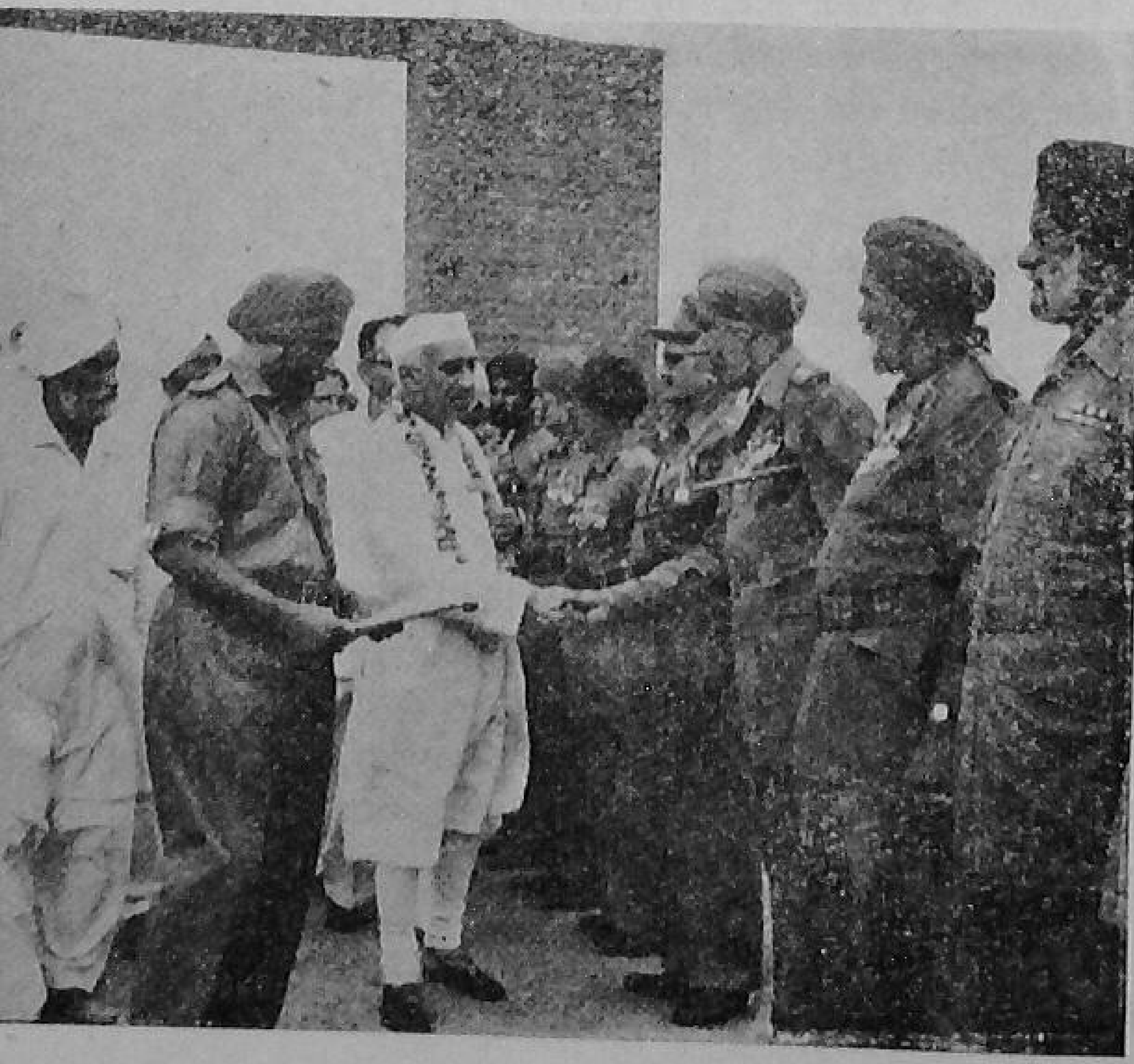
AS A SOLDIER

Naginder Singh felt happy and proud that his development efforts had won appreciation at the hands of the leader of the nation. He did not forget that he was essentially a soldier. Whatever he was today, was the result of the discipline and training he had received in the Army. He reflected how as a raw lad of nineteen he had joined the Army in 1929 as a sepoy. Through earnestness and hard work, he had risen to the rank of a Subedar. He had served during the war and distinguished himself at a number of places in India and abroad. He had retired from the Army in 1947.

Punjab is a land of warriors. There were scores of War veterans in and around village Majri, several of whom were comrades-in-arms of Subedar Naginder Singh. On this memorable occasion, they had all mustered strong. Though advanced in years as evident from the wrinkles left on their weather-beaten faces, their hearts were stout as ever. As their breasts shone with many medals won on the battle-field, their eyes sparkled with joy when the Prime Minister shook hands with each one of them.

Though from the battle field to the development field is a far cry, yet in a way it is not so.

The Ex-Servicemen of the locality being introduced to the Prime Minister.



The two are alike inasmuch as both require great courage, selfless service and a high sense of devotion and patriotism. That explains why the change-over from the soldier's profession to that of a development worker is so easy and natural. Subedar Naginder Singh was in a reflective mood. His thoughts went back to a sultry day in 1934 when he was returning from his Army Unit to his village. As he walked across the dry fields under a hot copper sky, his throat was parched and he became weary of walking. He sat down under the shade of a *kikar* tree. There was no well nearby and he could not quench his thirst. That day, he resolved to do something for providing drinking water for the benefit of travellers on that long and dusty road. Soon after, he started renovating an old well and also constructed a mud hut near it. Before returning to his Unit on the expiry of his leave, he also engaged a person to provide drinking water to the travellers. He continued paying him a sum of Rs. 5 per month out of his meagre salary as a sepoy.

Next year when he again visited his village, he persuaded some young men to join him in the construction of a Gurdwara near the well. He laboured two hours daily doing earth work for the building. Some trees were also planted near the well to provide shade to the weary travellers. Later, he collected money from his Unit and erected a beautiful building for a Gurdwara.

IN THE DEVELOPMENT FIELD

Though Naginder Singh had an aptitude for welfare and development work from his childhood, it blossomed forth only after his retirement when he got an opportunity to translate his ideals into action. The times also proved very favourable. India, after 1947, was dedicated to the cause of development. The inspiring words of Prime Minister Nehru, broadcast on the Radio on 16th August, 1947, exhorting the people to accept the new values of life and to work hard for the reconstruction of the country, worked like a magic on him. He made up his mind to follow the advice of the beloved leader and selected his village as the scene of his activities.

Hercules-like, he undertook project after project and completed them through self-help without relying on Government assistance. Not that he was averse to accepting Government help. In

fact, Government help did come to him in plenty and in the acceptance of which he had little hesitancy. But all this came unasked for and in the wake of their self-help. What he decried was a slavish dependence on Government help. He worked upon the ideal of self-help which later on became the corner stone of the country's Five Year Plans and the Community Development Programme. In the beginning, treading this path was not an easy job. He had lot of critics who scoffed at him, even called him a 'maniac', for "was it not the duty of the Government to build the schools, dispensaries and the rest ?", they seemed to argue. But Naginder Singh did not mind this criticism. He continued his efforts, even single-handed sometimes. He made his own Two-year Plans and he has succeeded in completing seven plans by this time.

During the first Plan in 1948, Subedar Naginder Singh extended the Gurdwara building spending Rs. 10,000 collected through contributions. In 1950, a building for Panchayat Ghar was completed at a cost of Rs. 5,000.

During his Third Plan, he succeeded in constructing a building for the Girls' Primary School costing about Rs. 5,000. In the year 1954, a Veterinary Hospital was built at a cost of Rs. 10,000. The building for Rural Dispensary and Health Centre costing Rs. 25,000 was completed in 1956 as a part of his fourth Plan. The Public Library and Rest House was built in 1958 on which was spent a sum of Rs. 15,000. The next Plan envisaged the extending of the building of Girls Primary School so as to house the middle school as well. This involved an expenditure of Rs. 24,000 and was completed in 1960. In 1962, Subedar Naginder Singh and his colleagues established a Service Co-operative Stores on the building of which a sum of Rs. 10,000 was spent.

The Seventh Plan was taken up by him on his return from Delhi last year when the Prime Minister promised to visit his village. There was no road connecting his village to the Grand Trunk road. "How can the Prime Minister motor down to the village ?" he said to himself. He decided to complete it whatever the magnitude of the task. He persuaded the inhabitants of nearby villages namely, Alour, Bhadla, Boothgarh, Asmailgarh, Alipore, Manak Majra, Lahar Majra Kalan, Sharan Majra, Jallowal, Fategarh Neoan, Kajri, Raipore, Saidpore, Dholewal, Kheri, Baur, Odel Pore, Mullanpur, Damheri and Ladpuri to do earth work on a 5-miles link road connecting Guru Nanaksar Colony to G.T. Road at a place 3 miles South East of Khanna. The people came forward to do voluntary labour on this road which is 14 feet wide and 2½ feet high. They completed it in time before the Prime Minister's visit to the village.

THE FUTURE

Naginder Singh's Two-year Plans are still continuing. Consistent with the demand of the times, his latest efforts are in the field of the defence of the country. A new building for the "Air Rifle Club" is soon coming up where rifle training will be imparted to the school children.

This Hercules in the development field has been responsible for 10 different projects so far on the completion of which a sum of Rs. 1.5 lakhs has been spent. Though ageing and adding one more wrinkle every year to his tough-looking face, he does not show any signs of slackening his efforts in the development field. As someone asked him the other day, "Sardarji, now that you have got everything that can reasonably be expected in a modern colony, would you like to take rest and pass your last few years in peace," he promptly replied, "No rest for me. I have got more Two-year Plans in my mind than perhaps the number of years that lie ahead of me."

"What are the next requirements of the villagers you would like to meet ?"

"The standard of living of many of our fellow villagers is still far from satisfactory," he said, "and to improve this they need better and still better agriculture and more of small industries run by power." As he said this, his mind intuitively went back to the good old days when not a drop of water was available to the weary travellers to his village, and he heaved a sigh of relief at the long distance which they had travelled since then.

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WHY VILLAGE VOLUNTEER FORCE

BALWANTRAY MEHTA

WITH THE appearance of the Emergency in this country, the Nation became awake and every activity which could serve the purpose of defending this country against aggression, was stimulated and forces which could help the national effort began to operate. The people spontaneously went into action and every effort was made in every quarter to see that the hands of the Government were strengthened in the national task of defending the country. It was a unique and soul-stirring sight. Every lover of the country, every patriot rejoiced to see that the nation rose like one man in the hour of its crisis.

India is a nation of villages and as such they had to function in this emergency in proportion to the danger that threatened the country. Simple village folk in villages did not wait to be told what they were expected to do. Nobody wanted to keep behind in the race for coming to the rescue of the nation. Unsophisticated and simple villagers assembled in their villages, Chavadis, took counsel amongst themselves and decided to contribute their mite to vindicate the honour of the country. They had in their village panchayats, a forum from which they could operate. The village elders and enthusiastic youths, all combined, vied with each other to make themselves useful. It was at this juncture that the Ministry for Community Development and Cooperation prepared a plan of action for the villages and worked out elaborate schemes which would guide our millions of people in rural areas to be of assistance to the country in its great efforts.

The Village Volunteer Force was thought of as both a machinery for the implementation of a programme of action as well as a programme by itself. The Village Volunteer Force is expected to consist of the village youth. All youths within the age group of 18 to 30 are supposed to come forward to join the Village Volunteer Force and the Government take upon themselves the responsibilities of training and guiding them and providing a programme for them. Such a force once constituted would be of tremendous advantage both to the villages concerned and to the nation at large.

ITS FUNCTIONS

The Chinese aggression on our borders served as a rude shock to the teeming millions of this country who were leading an easy normal life and who did not mind discomforts and inconveniences that came their way in their humdrum routine life. They would not have liked to exert themselves to improve their conditions in normal times but the aggression on the borders awakened them and pushed them into an arena of action. To people who were thus both ease-loving and self-contented, it is bound to be a great advantage if the new generation amongst them could be trained into habits of discipline, self-control and self-development. This is the purpose which the Village Volunteer Force is supposed to serve. The village youths require to be given a training in discipline, team spirit, collective action and life of responsibility. The Village Volunteer Force is bound to be useful in giving this necessary orientation to the village youth and thus provide a corrective to them which they do badly require.

Apart from the discipline and team spirit which a simple military training could impart to the village youth, this course will be the starting point for carrying out necessary useful activities and reforms in the rural life. There are certain obvious functions which such a force is to perform. In an emergency all national assets are to be protected and installations essential to the well-being of the people are to be made secure. The Village Volunteer Force could carry it out through one of their squads. They may require special training which may be in addition to what they receive in common with others. A vigilance squad to find out how people behave, especially those amongst them, who do not mean well to the country will have to be formed. This force, through one of the squads can thus act against sabotage.

Again in a national emergency it would be desirable if the protection and maintenance of law and order in a limited sense could be taken over by the villages themselves. The forces that control law and order will have much more urgent

work to do and they should be spared from their other duties to devote themselves to meet the situation arising out of the emergency. Thus the Village Volunteer Force could function as an auxiliary to the police force in the country in rural areas.

THIRD LINE OF DEFENCE

We have regular defence forces in this country to guard the honour, integrity and sovereignty of this country against attacks from any quarter. Those forces have to be expanded and strengthened. We have also a territorial army which could function in a given situation as a second line of defence. I suggest that the Village Volunteer Force should be considered in the context of the emergency as a third line of defence. This would mean an additional and intensive course of training for most of those amongst the village youths, who have proved their competency in the task allotted to them. It may not be that all the village youths are to be given intensive training. Even if we can do so for a fraction of the village youth, it will, in the aggregate, give to us a tremendous force which could be used to advantage in a serious situation.

We want to build the assets of our country. It is imperative in order to improve the economic situation in the countryside. This may not be done by normal plan in normal times but it is quite possible in a situation that exists at present to divert the energies of the village youth to the tasks of building such assets. Village jungles, village orchards, fisheries, piggeries, poultry farms, co-operative farming and co-operative village industries could be considered in this connection. These and similar other activities could bring plenty and prosperity to the people of the villages. The Village Volunteer Force could function as a lever with which to build such assets. This can be done through the well-established method of 'Shramdan' in a country which cannot utilise fully the ample manpower resources at its disposal. If we could utilise this manpower in increasing the rural economic assets, that will be a permanent advantage to those who lead a poor miserable life in this country.

INCREASING PRODUCTION AND EMPLOYMENT

We have tried to increase production, both in the agricultural and industrial fields during the past few years as part of the national plan. We have considerably improved our production but we may not be able to say that we have attained self-sufficiency which is of prime importance for our existence. We have to redouble our efforts and mobilise our resources both human and material in order to strive for such self-sufficiency. This will provide an answer not only to our problem of growing population and meet the primary needs of the country in performing its duty to feed its population, but this will add to our national resources, increase the national dividend, and raise our standard of life. So an effort in this direction will serve purposes more than one. The Village Volunteer Force could act as a catalytic agent or as a striking force, in this great adventure of meeting the needs of the country in the matter of food. It can also assist in many other directions and add to the national wealth.

Nations live not merely for material well-being but they have also to cater to the emotional and spiritual needs of the people. People who desire to exert themselves need to be provided with work in order to keep them engaged in useful activities. The satisfaction that a person derives from having done day's duty and the elation that one feels when one has done his best for a good cause are too valuable assets to be ignored. There are people who want work, who are strong enough to exert themselves and who are capable of adding to the resources of the country. Such people require to be provided with opportunities for work and for the satisfaction of their spiritual needs. Those who want to work but do not get the wherewithal to do this, feel disgusted with the life they lead and with the world within which they move and have their being. We have to provide opportunities to people who are in such despondent mood. The Village Volunteer Force could function as an agent which could break this vicious circle and bring about better conditions of life for those who feel that life is a burden to them.

Thus the Village Volunteer Force as conceived by the leaders of the nation has to perform a very useful and indispensable role in this country. This needs all our powers of organisation and continuous guidance for purposeful action. Those of us who are better situated and who have an opportunity to be of service to those who are un-

(*Continued on page 7*)

Vikas Yojana Ki Kahani & Bambam Kaka

SHRI SHANKER PANDEYA BHOJPURI

THERE HAS been a great need for a book in easy and simple language to carry the story of the Community Development Programme to the children. Shri Bhojpuri, the author of the books: VIKAS YOJANA KI KAHANI and BAMBAM KAKA has attempted to fulfil this need. The story of building the rural India,—its agriculture, industries, cattle wealth, etc., and in short to raise the standard of living of the average man in the villages during the last 12 years is indeed an exciting adventure which could very well capture the imagination of our young folk. But it seems the author has set before himself a very limited objective. No attempt has been made to bring out the basic fact that this is a people's programme sought to be planned and executed by the people themselves through their own elected bodies, like Panchayats, Co-operatives and Voluntary organisations like Mahila Mandals, Youth Clubs etc. There is much too much emphasis on the various block officials. This seeks to give a wrong impression that the C.D. programme is mainly carried out by the B.D.O. and his staff. To say that under the C.D. programme the villagers first apply to the Jan Sevak meaning the Gram Sevak who forwards the application with his remarks to the B.D.O. on whose orders the final action is taken, is a process just the opposite of what C.D. Programme and Panchayati Raj seek to establish.

In BAMBAM KAKA, an attempt has been made with partial success to describe the functioning of a village Sarpanch. It suffers from several defects. A loosely connected story hops from chapter to chapter. The second chapter dealing with the court held by the Panchayat starts with an absolutely wrong statement by the complainant saying that his grandmother had been killed by Pandit ji. One wonders how the Panchayat could take cognisance of a murder case. But later on, it transpires that the old woman was not really dead, not even seriously injured, but had received minor injuries since she was able to trudge along by herself when she was summoned to appear in the Panchayat court. The way in which the old woman addresses Bambam Kaka, "Hukam Ho, Sarkar!" reminds one that the Sarpanch is another feudal chief. The impression created is disgusting.

There are some glaring inaccuracies of facts, *e.g.*, the Community Project Scheme was launched by Dr. Rajendra Prasad on 2nd October, 1952; the boundary of a block is coterminus with that of a police station; the collector is the chairman of the Block Samiti and that the technical officers at the district level prepare schemes and submit to the Block Samiti for its approval, etc. Once these misstatements and inaccuracies find their way in the young minds, it will be difficult to remove them later on when they grow up.

What lends poignancy to the situation is that the books have been approved as texts for the Primary and Middle Schools. The books, being priced at Re. 0.75 and Rs. 1.37 respectively are definitely too costly for the young ones whom they are meant to serve.—*Editor*.

WHY VILLAGE VOLUNTEER FORCE

(*Continued from page 6*)

fortunate and not so well situated have to exert ourselves to see that a new and promising life opens out to such unfortunate members of our family. May God bestow upon us and upon the leaders of the nation His blessings so that they may be able to serve this country by providing satisfactory leadership and guidance to such people. I hope that the Village Volunteer Force with the assistance of proper leadership and guidance will be able to fulfil a felt need of this country.

PANCHAYAT BHAVAN

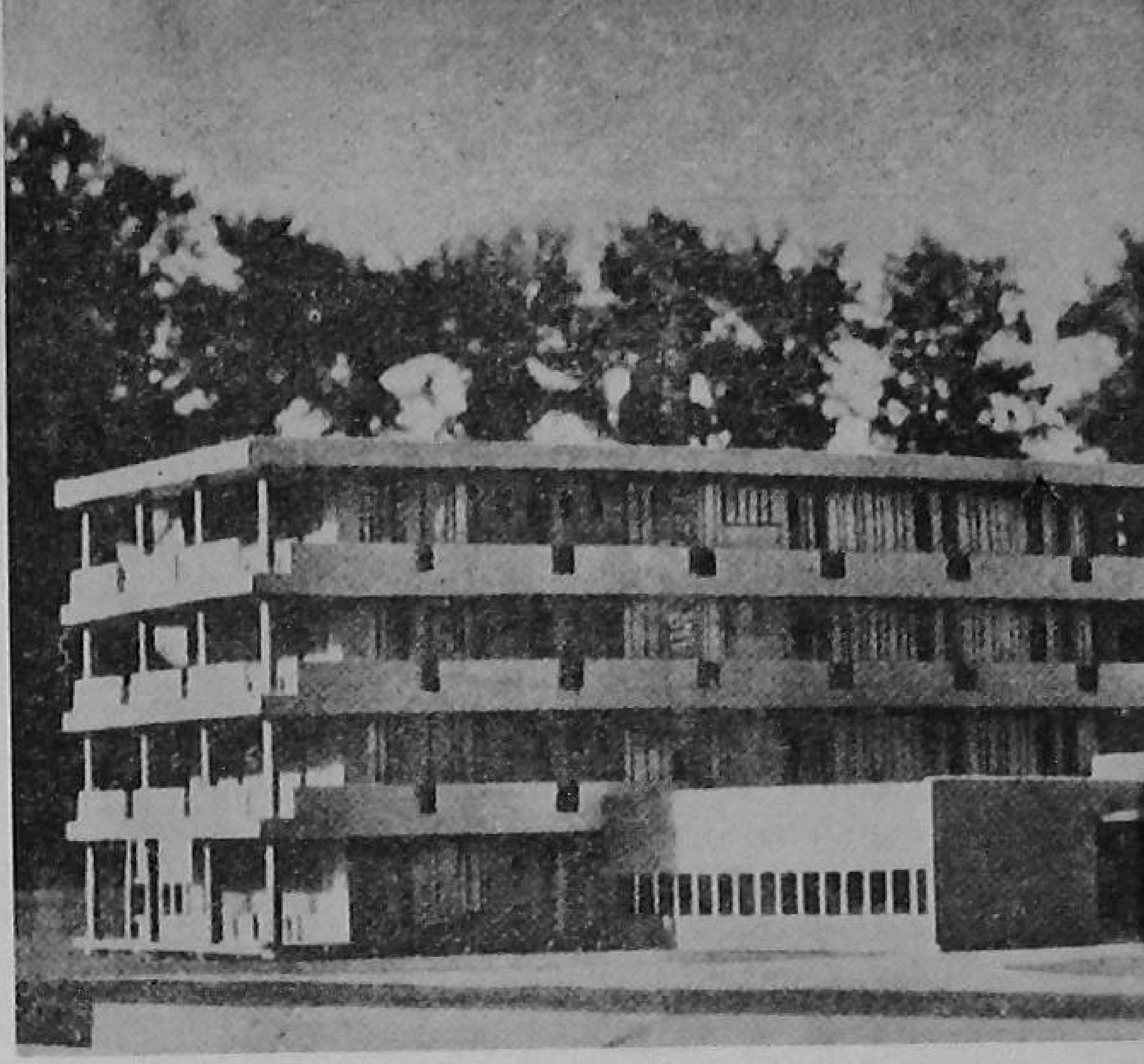
Chandigarh's New Landmark

M. K. RAO

PANCHAYAT BHAVAN—an important landmark in the city of Chandigarh, Punjab's new Capital, was declared open by the Prime Minister, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, on July 7. The building, which will be completed in October this year, is the "inspiring symbol of Panchayati Raj" in the State—the first of its kind in the country. The building is estimated to cost Rs. 12.36 lakhs, of which the Panchayati Raj institutions' share is Rs. 10.26 lakhs. In its scope and content, it will be unique among the numerous buildings of modern architecture that dot the skyline of Chandigarh. Panchayat Bhavan is a visible expression of the aims and aspirations of rural Punjab, and the determination of the State Government to establish Panchayati Raj in the State on a sound footing. It is a standing monument of team work between the people's representatives and the administration for the success of the Panchayati Raj.

A TRAINING CENTRE AND A HOME

For the success of Panchayati Raj the spirit of selfless service on the part of the people's representatives is essential, but not enough. Something more is required. It is to train and equip the people's representatives for the proper discharge of their onerous responsibilities. The Punjab Government realised this as early as 1960, and has given shape to a project which is of the greatest significance. The four-storey Panchayat Bhavan, standing on Madhya Marg in Sector 18, is a multipurpose building designed to serve as a State level institution for the training of various categories of personnel concerned with the implementation of Panchayati Raj in the State. It is a well-equipped training centre, with facilities for conference and seminars on matters connected with Panchayati Raj and allied subjects. It is a meeting place for the members of Panchayati Raj institutions, who can use it as a home away from home when in Chandigarh. It is a place where the representatives of Panchayati Raj institutions can acquire from close proximity the direct



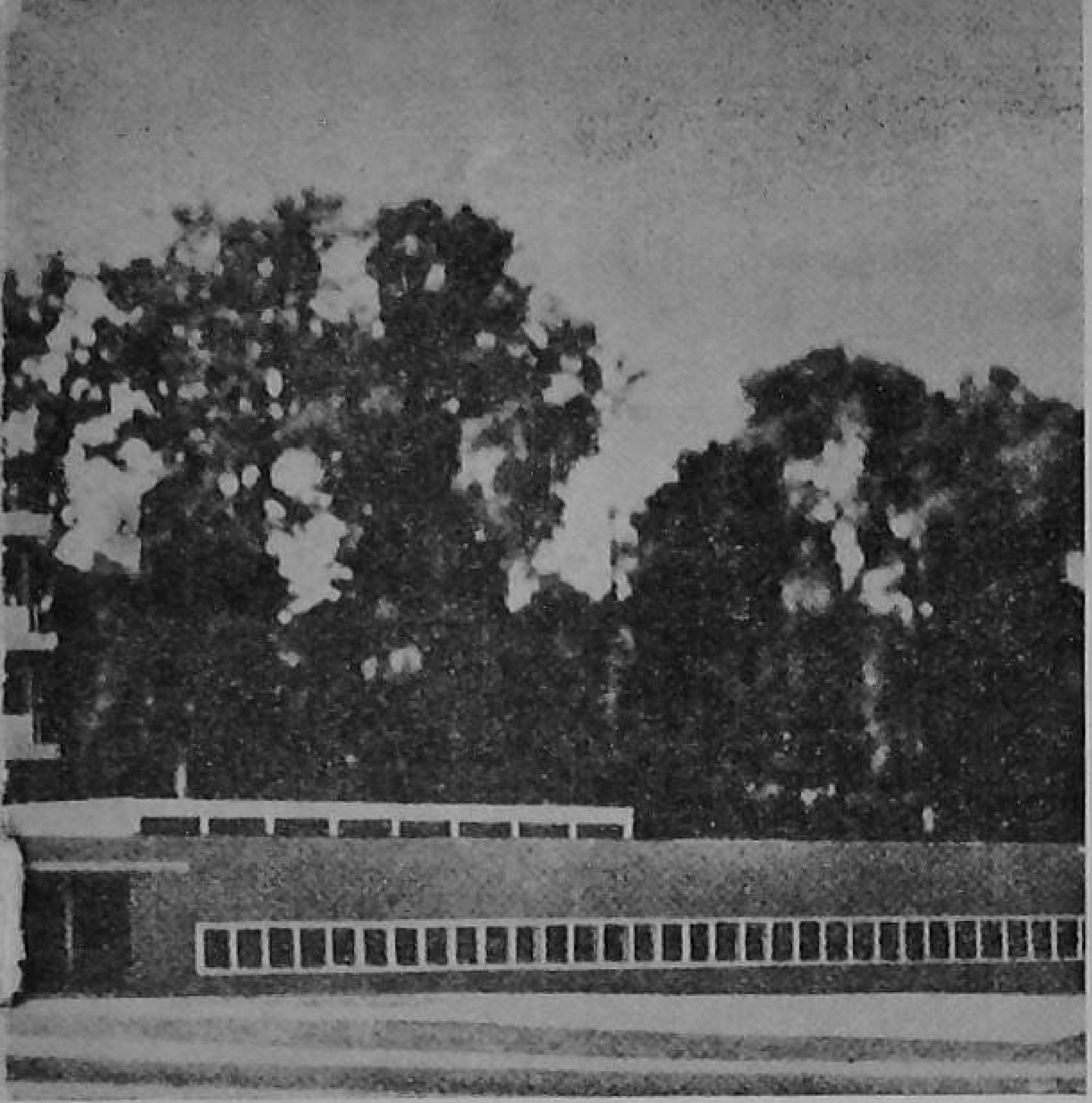
A view of the Panchayat Bh

knowledge of how the State Government functions. They can also pool their experiences for serving in a better way the needs of the people they represent.

PANCHAYATS' OWN CREATION

Panchayat Bhavan houses a library of Panchayati Raj literature and will have arrangements for providing information to villagers and members of Panchayati Raj institutions. It will also be a place for recreational and cultural activities. The building is now in the last phase of construction and is expected to be completed in all aspects by October. The Panchayat Bhavan at Chandigarh is, in the true sense of the term, Panchayats' own creation and rural Punjab can justly be proud of it. Some of the main features of the Bhavan are : the spacious Assembly Hall, a Library and Reading Room, Recreation Room, Information Centre, Exhibition Hall, six Committee rooms and two lecture rooms besides the office rooms and dormitories for accommodating 250 people. The expenditure on maintenance of staff is to be shared between the State Government and Panchayati Raj institutions. The management of Panchayat Bhavan has been entrusted to a Governing Body, comprising representatives of the Government and Panchayati Raj institutions.

The inaugural function of the Bhavan was impressive. Besides the State Chief Minister and



van built at Chandigarh.

his Cabinet colleagues, Union Minister for Community Development and Co-operation, Shri S. K. Dey, and other dignitaries, it was attended by the Presidents of all the Zila Parishads and a large number of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Block Panchayat Samitis. In keeping with the spirit of the occasion, the Zila Parishad Presidents and the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Block Panchayat Samitis were introduced to the Prime Minister.

NEHRU'S SPEECH

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Nehru spoke of the various problems facing the country. He said that the establishment of Panchayati Raj was a memorable event and its role in the present fight for economic independence was a vital one. The Panchayat system of administration established nearly four years ago was a great step forward. It was something different from the old Panchayats. It had great responsibility in creating unity among the people, in removing the feeling of high and low, and in making them think in a big way. The future of India, said the Prime Minister, depended on how the people behaved, on their courage, confidence and ability. The real strength of a country depended on the education and will of its people. Besides, it was also necessary to lift people from the morass of inaction, caused by age-long slavery. Great efforts were no doubt being made in this direction. But, these efforts would not bear the desired results unless the Panchayats lent their full support. With the sharing of power, which Panchayati Raj stood for, the Panchayats should devote all attention to the uplift of the villages and the people living in the rural areas. Without the progress of our numerous villages and villagers, India's progress could not be achieved, he declared.

Paying a tribute to the achievements of Panchayati Raj institutions in the country, particularly in the Punjab, the Prime Minister said that the most significant achievement of these institutions was that they had succeeded in rousing a consciousness among the people in the countryside to the increased responsibilities they had to bear at the present juncture.

Shri Nehru warned the panches of the dangers inherent in democracy. Democratic procedure, he said, could be used both for good and bad purposes. If the people were educated, intelligent, hard working and above all, constructive in thought and action, democracy would work wonders. Otherwise it would wreck the very fibre of the nation it was meant to build up.

The other danger, he said was the greed for power, to seize it and stick to it by all means. He deplored the general tendency to retain power and stick to the position once secured. This tendency was dangerous, and had to be removed, he added. To aspire for a position was not necessarily bad, but to hanker after it and cling to it and to adopt wrong methods to achieve this was objectionable.

Panchayati Raj, Shri Nehru went on to say, if correctly implemented could form a strong bulwark against this possessive tendency. Diversified power, decentralised administration and mass participation in governmental affairs would also counter the tendency of the multitudes looking to one man for guidance, and would serve as a deterrent to the lust for power of the few.

Referring to Panchayat Bhavan, the Prime Minister said that he had been associated with the inauguration of many a massive building but he was particularly happy to be present at this function because of the picture of people's participation it conjured up.

Popularising Improved

(By Our

VIGYAN BHAVAN was the venue of a two-day conference on 15th and 16th July on manufacture and popularisation of Improved Agricultural Implements. The Conference was presided over by Shri S. K. Dey, Minister for Community Development and Co-operation and was inaugurated by Dr. Ramsubhag Singh, Union Agriculture Minister. It was a representative gathering consisting of progressive farmers, Agricultural Engineers, village artisans and manufacturers of implements from all over the country.

S. K. DEY'S SPEECH

Shri Dey, in his presidential address remarked that there could not be any two opinions about the necessity of introducing modern agricultural implements in order to step up agricultural production as well as to speed up rural industrialisation. He said it was a pity that in spite of so much stress being laid by everyone including even the Prime Minister, the manufacture and adoption of improved implements had not forged ahead appreciably. One of the reasons for this slow progress was the fact that quite often an effort was made to dump the implements from above without taking the people of the locality into confidence. The result was that the implements were lying idle at block headquarters or panchayat offices as "model pieces for exhibition". The Panchayati Raj bodies and even the progressive farmers themselves could play a prominent role in popularising these implements provided these suited their requirements and pockets, too. He asked the conference to evolve simple, labour-saving and efficient tools and implements which could be got by the farmers at reasonable rates. He was against producing stereotyped implements which did not suit the peculiar soil conditions and manpower of different regions.

He said while it was possible to produce agricultural implements in public and private sectors, the dominant share of their production should go to the co-operative sector. Government institutions, instead of entering the field of manufacture, should conduct research for evolving improved ones.

Some of the improved farm implements on sale at a Co-operative Society.

Mr. Dey suggested that the Government should supply sufficient quantities of iron and steel to village artisans for fabricating these implements. Extension workers and Gram Sevaks should be trained in their use and they should demonstrate to the farmer how to use them. Village artisans should be given elementary training in repairing and servicing these implements.

CONFERENCE INAUGURATED

Inaugurating the Conference, Dr. Ramsubhag Singh pointed out that our farmers needed tools, implements and machines which were simple, cheap and yet effective. He deprecated the tendency to imitate the tools, and machines designed in foreign countries. These, he said, could not be adopted by our farmers since our conditions and methods were different from theirs. Our farmers could not afford to take much risk. They took up improved implements only when convinced of their efficiency and efficacy.

The Minister was gratified to note that some simple implements such as mould-board type of plough, rotary paddy weeder and levelling *karaha* or *keni* had become quite popular in some areas. In one district of Maharashtra alone the Soil Conservation Officer used about 20,000 *kenies* or

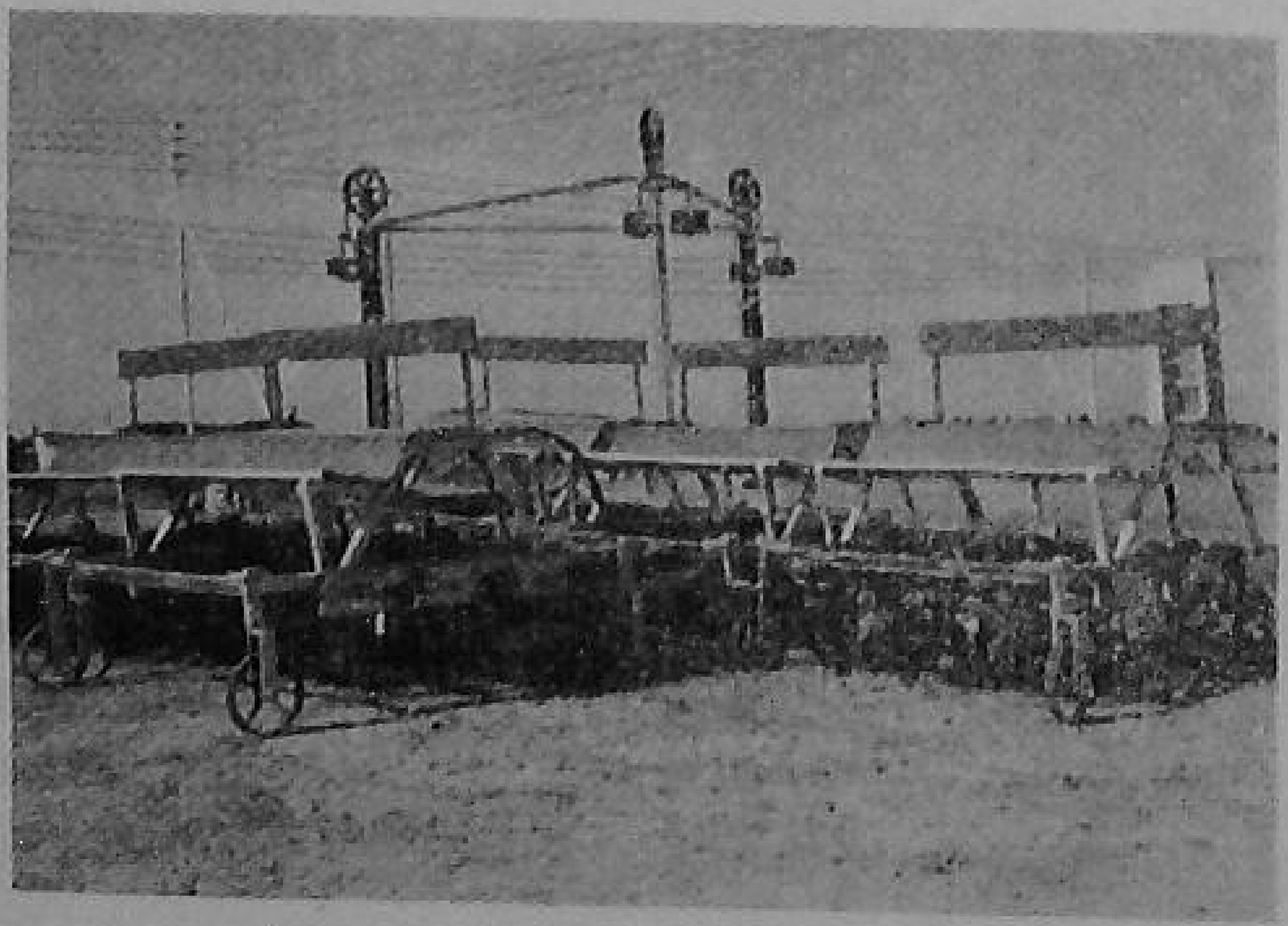
Agricultural Implements

Correspondent)

levelling *karahas* for making bunds. In this district, the target of bunding five lakh acres had already been achieved. In the black cotton soil area of the Deccan about three lakh mould-board plough were in use. Similarly in Punjab and Western U.P. a large number of farmers were using fodder cutters. It is estimated that at least about four lakh of bullock-driven sugarcane crushers were in use in Punjab and Western U.P. The number of mould-board ploughs used in 1951 was nearly nine lakhs whereas it was now nearly 23 lakhs. So also the number of centrifugal pumps with oil engines used in 1951 were 82,000. In 1961 the figure had arisen to 2,30,000. In 1951 the number of tractors was only 8,500 whereas it was now over 34,000. That only showed that if the implements were really useful and within the purchasing power of farmers, they did not feel shy of adopting them.

Continuing, the Agriculture Minister remarked that for the majority of farmers in India, simple bullock-driven or manually operated implements would be useful. Our farmers were not averse to use modern power-driven machinery which was useful and economic. He regretted that the pace of production of tractors, particularly those of less than 10 H.P. had been very slow. The rapid production of the latter type of tractors, he said, was very important in the existing conditions in our country. If countries like Japan could produce lakhs of such tractors and if farmers could use them in Japan, there was no reason why our farmers should not come forward to use such tractors. In fact, such tractors will gain ground and become popular in our country. However, this depended upon the price of these tractors commonly known as "power tillers". If this price was within the range of Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 2,500, quite a fair percentage of farmers, particularly in paddy growing areas, would start using them. This was because the price of a good pair of bullocks had gone very high and the bullocks had to be maintained throughout the year. If such tractors were produced in India quickly, it will be a great boon to our Indian farmers. He appealed to the manufacturers to expedite the production of such small tractors by giving highest priority for this line of manufacture. He further laid emphasis on the production of electric pumping sets in view of the growing rural electrification.

Olpid threshers manufactured at the agricultural Workshop at Ludhiana.



FARMERS' DIFFICULTIES

The Minister referred to the farmers' difficulties in using improved agricultural implements for lack of repair and maintenance facilities in the villages. Unless these facilities were quickly created, he said, not very many farmers would come forward to use the implements. He was, therefore, of the opinion that repair and servicing facilities should be created in every Community Development Block and later extended to every village by training the village artisan. In this connection, he referred to the standardisation of improved implements so as to ensure interchangeability of parts as in the case of bicycles, sewing machines, etc.

He further expressed the opinion that some of the modern equipment was rather too costly for the individual Indian farmer to use. This was particularly true of machines such as tractors, oil engines, and power threshers. The only way out was to use such machines on co-operative basis or to establish hire and hire-purchase system. He also referred to the difficulty of shortage of iron and steel in the production of implements in adequate quantities and said that every possible step should be taken to ensure fair distribution of the raw material required.

COMMUNITY ON THE MOVE

PANCHAYAT TO PAY LAND REVENUE OF JAWANS

LAND REVENUE payable by the Jawans or their families would be paid up by the Village Panchayat in Badu, a village of Parbatsar Panchayat Samiti in Nagaur district of Rajasthan. This decision was taken by the Panchayat as a token of the villagers' regard for the Jawans on the front. The Panchayat has already deposited all the arrears of land revenue outstanding against Jethee Singh, a jawan now on the front, for his 40-bigha holding.

A DEVELOPMENT-CONSCIOUS VILLAGE

THE RESIDENTS of village Dhundharka under the Mandsaur Development Block in Madhya Pradesh have been evincing great interest in development activities. As a result of their ready contributions, the village now enjoys the facilities of a girls' school, gram sevak's quarters, lady teachers' residential quarters, a sanitary well, a community bathroom and community latrines. The village has also a veterinary dispensary which serves many neighbouring villages and a large-sized agricultural co-operative society which undertakes the distribution of fertilizers and seeds to the cultivators. A community centre, a youth club and a women's welfare centre have also been opened in the village. Moreover, a Primary Health Centre building costing Rs. 30,000 has also been recently completed with peoples' contribution. The village periodically organizes cattle exhibitions, Kisan Melas and sports competitions. All this progress has been possible because of the active interest shown by the Gram Panchayat.

THEY DID NOT WANT THE BRIDGE

THE PEOPLE of Irikkur, a village in the interior, in Taliparamba Taluk of Kerala resented the selection of their village as the Block Headquarters in 1957. When it was proposed to construct a bridge across the Valapatnam river to put an end to the isolation of the village during the rainy season, there was a hostile reaction. The people did not want a bridge across the river ! But persistent efforts on the part of the Block staff have begun to bear fruit now. The wind of change has begun to blow. The suggestion from the Block authorities that the narrow dirt-laiden streets should be broadened to enable buses and cars to pass through, was received with spontaneous response. People were at it in no time. Houses and shops which stood in the way were demolished and the road was broadened. About Rupees one lakh worth of loss has been sustained by the people in the process. Now they want the bridge, too ! And of course they are going to get it.

SCARCITY-HIT VILLAGERS SPURRED TO ACTION

AMONG THE several Talukas of Saurashtra affected by drought during the past year, Babra was the worst affected. But the adverse condition did not deter the people from actively participating in the State's plans for defence and development. People knew that misfortunes never come singly therefore, they never lost heart. Although out of the 59 villages, 36 were declared to be scarcity affected, villagers donated liberally to the N.D.F. A special programme has been launched for increasing agricultural production. 119 wells have been constructed as against the target of 100. More than 6,000 acres of land has so far been bunded and an Irrigation tank which commands an area of 600 acres, has also been constructed.

BORDER AREA ROADS REPAIRED THROUGH SHRAMDAN

REPAIR WORK on 34 miles of border roads in Champaran district in Bihar was carried out through shramdan offered by the V.V.F. members. The repair work would have cost the Government Rs. 34,000 otherwise.

V. V. F. ACTIVE IN NADIA DISTRICT

MORE THAN 2,000 members of the Village Volunteer Force have taken up the work of re-excavation of Thagbagi Beel in Krishnagar Block of Nadia district in West Bengal. At Dogachi village in the same district, members of the Volunteer Force have started excavation and clearance of water-hyacinth of Anjana river. More than 3,000 people have volunteered their labour for the

scheme. In Nakashipara Block, the Village Volunteer Force of Majhergram Gram Sabha have started the construction of a 2,640 ft. long bund. It will be 5 ft. high and 10 ft. wide.

More than 1,000 man-days' labour has been contributed to the Village Defence Bank by members of the Village Volunteer Force of Kalibash Gram Panchayat in the same Block. The members of the Volunteer Force from Kalibash, Barasimula, Taitichera and other adjacent villages took up the excavation of 2,500 ft. long Chiltia Drainage-*cum*-Irrigation channel. The scheme when executed is expected to benefit 800 acres of cultivable land.

35,400 MAN-DAYS FOR DEFENCE LABOUR BANK

ABOUT 35,400 MAN-DAYS have been credited towards the Defence Labour Bank by members of Village Volunteer Force Units in 30 Gram Panchayats under Kalimpong Community Development Block I in Darjeeling district. A comprehensive scheme of labour utilisation for different development activities has been chalked out by the various Gram Panchayats in the area. Shramdan by village volunteers has so far resulted in reclamation of 11 acres of waste land, implementation of two rural water supply schemes by tapping perennial sources, digging of 48 compost pits, construction of small irrigation channels benefiting 21 acres of land, preparation of four miles of village paths and construction of three school buildings and teachers' quarters with materials donated by the villagers. One of those schools at Lower Dungra Busty has already started functioning with 35 boys and girls. Two teachers have volunteered their services for the school and have declared that they will not demand any remuneration till the school received regular grants from the District School Board.

STORY OF SELF-HELP IN A BENGAL VILLAGE

VILLAGE DHUPJHORA in Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal has made rapid progress during the last few years, mainly depending on the initiative and enthusiasm of its people. The villagers themselves constructed a one-mile irrigation channel as a result of which 200 bighas of fallow land has been brought under cultivation for two major crops in a year.

Two villagers, Sri Bidya Mohan Rao and Sri Jogeswar Roy donated two bighas of land for starting a primary school. The villagers have themselves constructed a beautiful school building. It has now 85 students, both boys and girls. An Agricultural Development Co-operative Society was organised in 1960 with only 15 members. It has at present as many as 135 members on its roll. The society has taken up the task of purchasing seeds, fertilizers and cattle for the improvement of agriculture in the area. A Co-operative Grain-Gola, known as "Dharam Gola", has also been started for the tribal people, who constitute three-fourth of the population of the village. The land for this Co-operative godown has also been donated by a non-tribal villager. The villagers themselves have constructed through "Shramdan" one and a half mile road. The only financial help they got was a sum of Rs. 300 from the local Union Board.

STATE V. V. F. RALLY IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

SHRI S. K. DEY, Union Minister for C.D. & C. addressed a State Rally of Village Volunteer Force at Suni in Himachal Pradesh. About 4,000 volunteers from all over the State attended the rally despite the approaching harvesting season. Some volunteers trekked about 25 to 30 miles to take part in the rally. Group discussions, demonstration and physical training programmes were held during the three-day rally which concluded on June 28. Dramas, music programmes, exhibition and film shows of educative and recreational values were also held during the rally.

It was after years that the Union Minister had visited the Kunihar Block in Himachal Pradesh. He was highly impressed by the splendid work done by the people during the period. He said that looking to the number of roads that had been constructed and the children attending the school, he could confidently say that Kunihar was one of the best areas in Himachal Pradesh. The Union Minister suggested that every school teacher must donate 90 hours in a year to teach adults who were not fortunate to get education in their childhood.

(*Continued on page 16*)

FROM THE CENTRE

DEFENCE LABOUR BANK DONATIONS

THE SUGGESTION that individuals who are joining the Village Volunteer Force should at the same time give the pledge to donate twelve days' labour in a year, which is the minimum Defence Labour Bank donation, has been made by Shri S. K. Dey, Minister for Community Development and Co-operation in a letter addressed to Ministers of Community Development in all the States.

Though the membership of the Village Volunteer Force exceeds one crore today, Shri Dey has pointed out that the disparity between this figure and the total for Defence Labour Bank donation, which stands at about 3.3 crore man-days, could be closed if every volunteer to the Force were to make at least this minimum contribution. He has also pointed out that the failure to formulate work programmes expeditiously would end in the bulk of this new resource created through the donations remaining unutilised.

In another communication, the Union Minister for Community Development has suggested that if the vast force of school teachers in the rural areas of India can make the Defence Labour Bank donation of twelve days' free labour a year, in terms of an hour or so a day for 96 days, devoted to adult literacy, that campaign can be given a massive institutional support in the wider framework of the Village Volunteer Force scheme. Mass education is an integral part of the programme of the Village Volunteer Force.

In this connection, the Union Minister for Community Development has referred to an appeal made by the Union Minister of Education some time back calling for Vidya Dan or service in the literacy campaign from the teachers in the Primary, Middle and Secondary schools. He had suggested that for organizing this campaign the enthusiastic support of influential persons like Chairmen of the Zila Parishads and Block Samitis and others should be mobilised and accommodation found in convenient places like Panchayat Ghars, school buildings, etc.

STUDY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN INDIAN UNIVERSITIES

VARIOUS UNIVERSITIES in the country are now considering the recommendations of a Study Group appointed by the National Institute of Community Development, Mussoorie, that subjects like Community Development, Panchayati Raj and Co-operation, should be included in the general education courses offered to students.

The Study Group has suggested that coverage of the philosophy and objectives of Community Development, its programme and methods, its link with Panchayati Raj and Co-operation, and its achievement and problems, should be included in the university curricula. It has expressed the view that though there has been a growing awareness of the importance of planning and Community Development in the various universities, there has been little organised effort to develop an integrated approach to the problems of planned change.

Universities which do not offer a programme of general education, the Study Group feels, may be encouraged and helped to organise special extension courses in Community Development.

The Group is of the view that the subject of planned change including C.D., Panchayati Raj and Co-operation merits inclusion in the curricula of Anthropology, Economics, Political Science, Public Administration and allied subjects.

As an experimental measure, it has been suggested by the Group that integrated courses in planned change and C.D. should be started at two or three universities. The Study Group has also recommended award of fellowships to research students and lumpsum grants to selected university departments for the purpose.

It has been pointed out by the Group that the National Institute of Community Development with its resources, personnel and experience can serve as a centre of national importance offering its diplomas and research degrees in Community Development.

Stressing the need for methodology in research, the Group has asked the University Grants Commission to consider the setting up of a national centre for higher studies and research in methodology.

To facilitate training programmes for Community Development it has been suggested by the Group that the co-operation of some selected university departments should be enlisted to conduct special training courses for specified categories of Community Development personnel.

MATCHING GRANTS FOR PANCHAYATS

THE UNION MINISTRY of Community Development and Co-operation is now considering the question of constituting a non-lapsable fund to finance matching grants provided for the Panchayats.

Matching grants are given by the States to encourage Panchayats to raise resources by taxation. However, the manner of the provision of grant varies from State to State.

In Gujarat, there is a special fund out of which the District Panchayat makes grants to the Gram Panchayats to encourage them to raise their resources. In Maharashtra, Madras, Kerala, Punjab and Orissa, the system of matching grants exists but no funds as such have yet been constituted. Such grants are provided to Village Panchayats in Gujarat, Madras, Kerala and Orissa while in Maharashtra only Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads get this benefit.

The Union Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation has put up suggestions for higher matching grants for backward areas, and for linking of grant with labour resources (raised through Defence Labour Banks) as well.

As one of the important functions of Panchayati Raj bodies is to maintain the assets created by the C.D. Programme, it has been suggested that a portion of the grants should be specially allocated for maintenance work. Periodical inspection will also be there to ensure that the Panchayati Raj bodies do their maintenance work satisfactorily.

STATE PANCHAYAT PARISHADS

PANCHAYAT PARISHADS at the State level have been set up in Bihar, Assam, Madras, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Mysore and Madhya Pradesh with a view to assisting the growth of Panchayati Raj.

In Bihar, Parishads have been organised at the district and block levels too. In Madras, there are Taluk associations of Panchayats while in Andhra Pradesh, there are district associations. In Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Mysore and Assam, there are no such bodies below the State level.

The aims and objects of these Parishads mainly relate to study and research in Panchayati Raj, assistance to Panchayats in solving their problems and training of non-official functionaries.

Though the aims are similar in all the States, the composition of the Parishads varies. In Madras, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Assam, Parishads are completely non-official bodies. In Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh, however, Parishads were officially created. In Gujarat, the Minister for Panchayats is the chairman of the Parishad. In Andhra Pradesh, 17 members of the Chamber of Panchayats, as it is called, are nominated. The Mysore Parishad is a non-official body but its constitution provides for the Minister as chairman.

PANCHAYATI RAJ TRAINING CENTRES

SOME 66 PANCHAYATI Raj Training Centres are now functioning in the country, providing training facilities to Sarpanches, Up-Sarpanches and Panches. Of this, 25 are located in Uttar Pradesh, 10 each in Maharashtra and Rajasthan, 8 in Madhya Pradesh, 4 in Mysore, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur and Tripura. Three training centres are being set up in Gujarat.

The original target was to have about one hundred training centres by March, 1963, and to have another 50 in 1963-64. Because of the slow progress, it has now been decided not to have additional centres till the capacity of the existing centres is fully utilised.

The Union Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation has requested the States to provide financial assistance to the training centres on a revised pattern. Suggestions for improving the attendance at the centres have also been communicated to the State Governments.

The Central Institute of Panchayati Raj with cent per cent financial assistance from the Ministry is in charge of training principals and instructors of the Panchayati Raj Training Centres. So far, some 160 teachers have been trained at this Institute.

To ensure the sound working of Panchayati Raj Training Centres, it has been suggested that committees, representing officials and non-officials should be set up at the State level to look after them. The committees, besides periodically reviewing the work of the Panchayati Raj Training Centres, may also visit the centres and give them on-the-spot guidance.

INCENTIVES TO C. D. BLOCKS

In order to provide incentives to Panchayati Raj institutions for improving their performance, a proposal is under consideration for giving community awards to the Blocks for increasing agricultural production.

The existing All-India Community Award for 15% increase in the production of food crops, stops short at the district level and excludes from its scope the Block which is the most important level for the formulation and the execution of agricultural programmes.

The present proposal is to extend the award scheme to the Blocks also.

It has been suggested by the Union Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation that extension of community awards to the blocks may first be taken up in twelve districts, where assessment of production at Block level is being done on a pilot basis. Later it may be expanded to keep in step with the extension in coverage of the scheme of assessment.

The national prize under the present scheme is Rs. 50,000 to each qualifying State and in addition a Rashtra Kalash to the highest yielding district within the State. It has been suggested that similarly, all qualifying blocks may be given Rs. 75,000 each, and in addition a Zila Kalash to the highest yielding Block in each district.

Another incentive is to be provided by launching a productivity challenge competition for Blocks. Prizes may be given to Blocks which show an average production of more than a specified quantity of yield per acre (say more than 25 maunds of wheat and 35 maunds of paddy per acre). To start with, the challenges may be restricted to wheat and paddy.

A scheme for grading the Blocks is also under consideration. This will enable the clear identification of the weak blocks, to which special attention can be given.

It is also proposed to link up release of grants to the district with their achievement in the field of agricultural production. This scheme may be introduced from 1964-65.

COMMUNITY ON THE MOVE

(*Continued from page* 13)

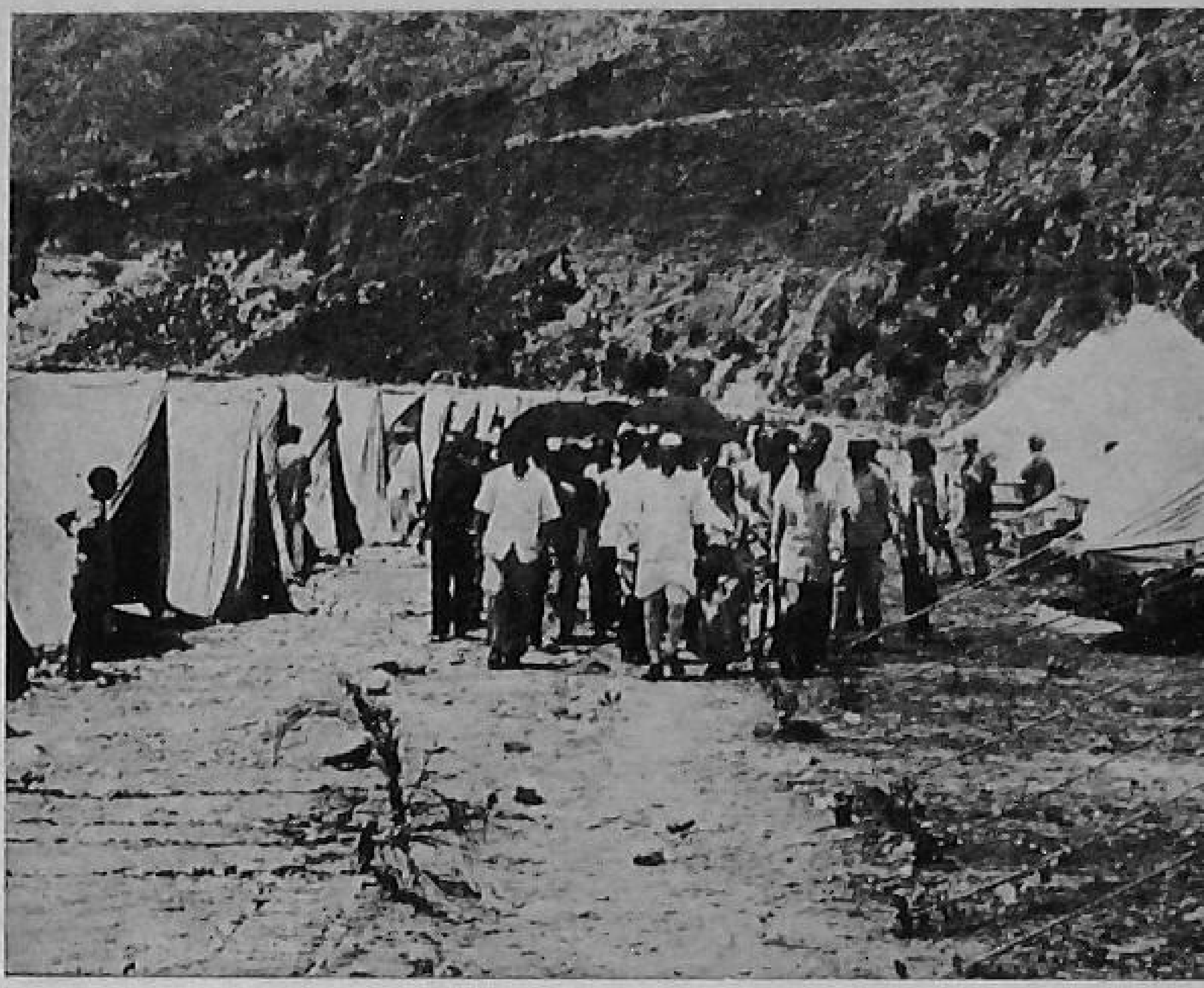
V. V. F. MEMBERS SAVE BRIDGE FROM COLLAPSE

About 60 Members of the Village Volunteer Force Units of Petla, Boyalmari, Borodanga and Alokjhari Gram Sabhas of Dinhata Sub-division in Cooch Bihar district, saved the wooden bridge near Rathbari Ghat over the river Dharla from collapse after working continuously for five days.

Eight to ten feet thick water-hyacinths near the bridge, spread over a length of about half a mile, pressed the pillars so hard following a sudden spate in the river, that total collapse of the bridge was apprehended. The V.V.F. members were pressed into action and in five days' time the water-hyacinths were cleared and the bridge, forming an important link in North Bengal, was saved from collapse.

Himachal Pradesh V.V.F. State Rally

Shri S. K. Dey taking salute at a March Past by the V.V.F. at Soni.



The camping site of the V.V.F. members.

A huge gathering of villagers and V.V.F. members attending a public meeting.

Some of the V.V.F. members beings introduced to Shri S. K. Dey.

Front view of the Public Library and Rest House which is one of a series of seven institutions, all built through self-help in Nanaksar Colony near Ludhiana in the Punjab. The place was recently visited by the Prime Minister.

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